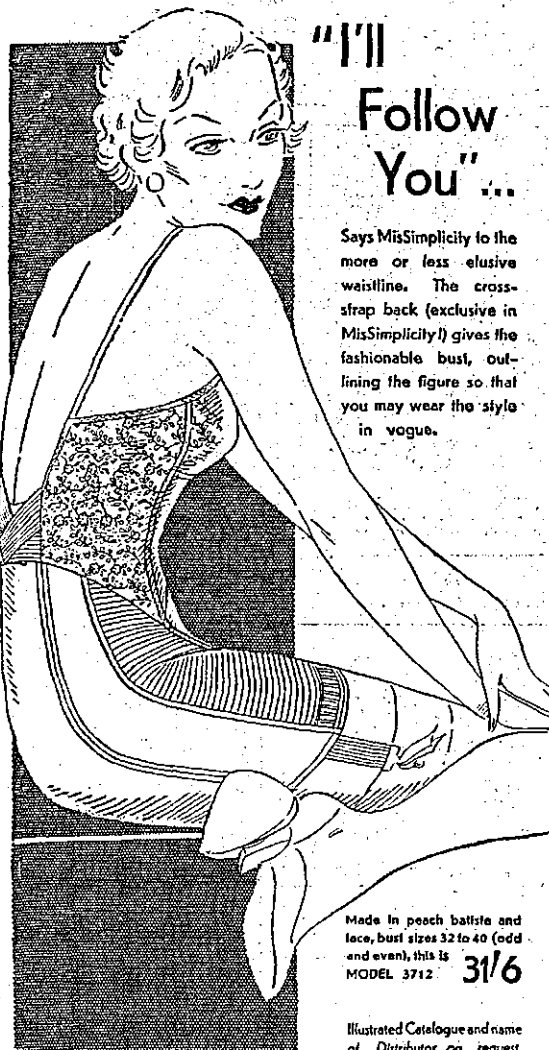


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Sir J. Simon.

SPEECH  
TWICE  
CORRECTED

MR. MACDONALD'S  
TREATY REVISION  
MYSTERY

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE ONE.)

separated only by the gangway from the seats of the mighty, leaned towards him and spoke with deliberation:—

"On the whole, Mr. Macdonald's four years of control of foreign relations have brought us nearer to war, and have made us weaker and poorer."

He was interrupted by the unending which-grew to a loud buzz of protest. The sounds came not from the Government side but from the bunch of Liberals who marched out of the Government a few months ago. They cried, "Oh, oh!" then they cried, "No, no!"

Mr. Churchill spun round on them. The sleepers awoke. Every one sat up in those excited as Mr. Churchill, flushing a little, substantiated his charge.

BACK TO HIS GUNS

"You have only to study the condition of Europe to-day," he said, "you have only to listen to know that we have been brought much nearer to war."

"But by whom?" some one demanded. It may have been the Liberal, Mr. Mander. It may have been the Tory, Major Glyn, the Prime Minister's secretary, sitting on the under-secretaries' bench, where a faithful resentment was now being registered.

Mr. Churchill flushed. He waved a moment, and said: "I do not wish to place it on one man's shoulders."

The under-secretaries cheered. Mr. Churchill stood back to his guns and fired again.

"When any single man," he said, "for four years has held the whole power of this country in foreign affairs in his hands, and when he has pursued a certain line of policy, you are making a profound mistake if you think that the efficiency of the public service is to be enhanced by pretending that the responsibility is not to be affixed to any one."

"I withdraw nothing. I repeat what I was saying. With the best endeavours and most praiseworthy exertions, the Prime Minister's efforts have not been attended at any point with a measure of success."

NAVAL NEEDS HAMPERED

Lausanne! He turned to the Liberals. Was Lausanne a success?

"When," he said, "debts and reparations have been forgiven throughout the world it will be time for the Liberals to range themselves up on the platform of the railway stations (a reference to the reception accorded to Mr. Macdonald at Victoria Station on his return from Lausanne)."

"But the position now is that we have let Europe off paying and have ourselves to pay America."

"The London Naval Treaty? It has hampered us in our naval needs."

"The arms embargo? We have abandoned it now, but we shall have to pay for it in the East. If trading intimacy should grow between Germany and Japan."

"Lastly there is the visit to Rome. 'I do not wish to treat this visit too seriously,' proceeded Mr. Churchill, and, playing on the emotions of the

House, he soon had members of all parties laughing themselves sore at the ridiculous figure he made the Prime Minister.

Sir John Simon was hit, too. He hid his feelings with a well-practised smile and a forced laugh. But Mr. Macdonald smiled in his seat.

"No doubt," said Mr. Churchill, "it was a very pleasant expedition. No doubt it gave a great deal of pleasure to Signor Mussolini—the same sort of pleasure as thousand years ago was given to a Pope when an Emperor paid a visit to Canossa."

MODERN DON QUIXOTE

(The Emperor Henry IV, had then to wait two days in his shirt in the snow for an audience.)

"And it, no doubt, gave a great deal of pleasure to spectators to see the master of sentimental words and the master of grim and rugged action meeting together in friendly intercourse."

"Well, we have got our modern Don Quixote home again (laughter) with Sancho Panza (more laughter) at his tail (roars of laughter), bearing with them these somewhat dubious trophies which they have collected amid the nervous shiverings of Europe."

"Let us hope that now Mr. Macdonald is safely back again among us he will first of all take a good rest."

"After that we hope he will devote himself to the urgent domestic tasks which await him here, which concern the well-being of millions of his poorer fellow subjects, and that he will leave the conduct of foreign affairs, at any rate for a little while, to be transacted by our competent Ambassadors through the normal diplomatic channels."

This whirlwind of abuse went completely unheeded. Mr. Macdonald and Sir John Simon sat for a few minutes consulting one another and seeking to force the sound of the mocking laughter which had swept over them.

GOVERNMENT WEAKNESS

It was a general comment that the Government were extremely weak in debating strength when they could put up no one immediately to give Mr. Churchill as good as he gave.

The attack destroyed the atmosphere of hope and amiability which earlier Mr. Macdonald had laboriously sought to build up in a typical speech of intangible phraseology.

The usual speech.

"The speech," Mr. Churchill had said, "with which we are so familiar. Mr. Macdonald has a gift of compressing the largest number of words into the smallest amount of thought."

Ambassadors and attachés of all countries crowded the diplomatic benches in discomfort to hear it. Peers packed their reserved benches. In the galleries and on the floor all seats were occupied by men and women eager to know the fruits of the Prime Minister's expedition to Europe.

Only one concrete fact could be gleaned from the forty-minute oration, and it was more guessed than heard. This was that Signor Mussolini's scheme, which Mr. Macdonald is studying, considering, and at soothed Europe's sore spot, the Polish corridor, by a four-Power pact between Great

Britain, France, Germany, and Italy.

Beyond this, all was vague. No one knew what new European commitments might be assumed by Great Britain in this effort to revise the Versailles Treaty.

For my part I must say that there was only one sentence of the speech which I thoroughly understood. It was a quotation. Mr. Macdonald said:—

"As a very notorious politician once said, 'Every treaty is holy; no treaty is eternal.'"

The following passage is an example of Mr. Macdonald's language:—

"The plan proposes that the treaty should be carried out within the framework of the League of Nations, and ten years was indicated as the first period of the treaty, should it be possible to arrange it."

"Indications were also given that if this conception or understanding between the Powers were adopted as an immediate aid to peace, as an immediate contribution to the solution of Europe's difficulties and dangers, the friendship engendered would have further beneficial consequences."

REMARKABLE CORRECTION

"That would be necessary, and the British Government would work out further details in this respect."

Mr. Lloyd George: Details of what? Mr. Macdonald: Details of the plan, so as to fill it up, so that the plan may not have, as its general purpose, peace, but its big and almost only purpose, revision of treaties. The whole plan which I am explaining we discussed with Signor Mussolini. I hope that is clear. (Loud laughter.)

In spite of the laughter the passage seemed to have a glimmering of meaning, but it was later the subject of remarkable correction.

The Prime Minister's private secretary informed the Press Gallery that what Mr. Macdonald meant to say was this:—

"The British Government would work out further details of the plan so as to fill it up, so that it might not merely have, as its general purpose, peace, but as its big and only purpose, the organisation of peace."

So apparently Mr. Macdonald had not meant to say anything about revision of treaties.

Next a message was sent to the Press Gallery to await a further correction. The third attempt at writing the sentence was later delivered to the Press Gallery in the following words:—

GENEVA IMPRESSIONS

"The British Government will work out details of the plan, so that the plan may not merely have as its general purpose peace, and its big and almost only detail revision of treaties."

Mr. Macdonald first gave his impressions of Geneva and the Disarmament Conference, remarking: "It is going to be no immediately accomplished job, the building of long bridges that separate one from another."

"I managed to get an interview with the French Prime Minister at Geneva and informed him of how we proposed to reply to the invitation, and next day in making some remarks on a speech which I made before the Disarmament Conference he was good enough to wish us both 'Bon voyage.'"

On the sudden arrival of the British Ministers in Rome a "short document" was put in their hands explaining Signor Mussolini's mind on a tentative policy of collaboration between the four Powers.

We expressed ourselves as being very much interested and when we studied the matter," said Mr. Macdonald, "Captain Anthony Eden, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, saved the debate for the Government. He is young—35—an accomplished speaker. So far as the disarmament discussion can be put in a frank and straight forward way, Captain Eden did it for 30 minutes. At the end he received an ovation."

THE CONTRAST

Sir John Simon, his chief, patted him affectionately on the shoulder as he sat down.

The tribute was in remarkable contrast to the Prime Minister's frigid reception earlier.

Captain Eden said that the Government have brought a sense of reality to the disarmament conference by proposing a definite draft convention, and that the visit to Italy, if it secured the co-operation of Italy in the settlement of the dispute between France and Germany, would make a great step forward.

Mr. Churchill heard himself reprimanded in those language for his attack on the Prime Minister.

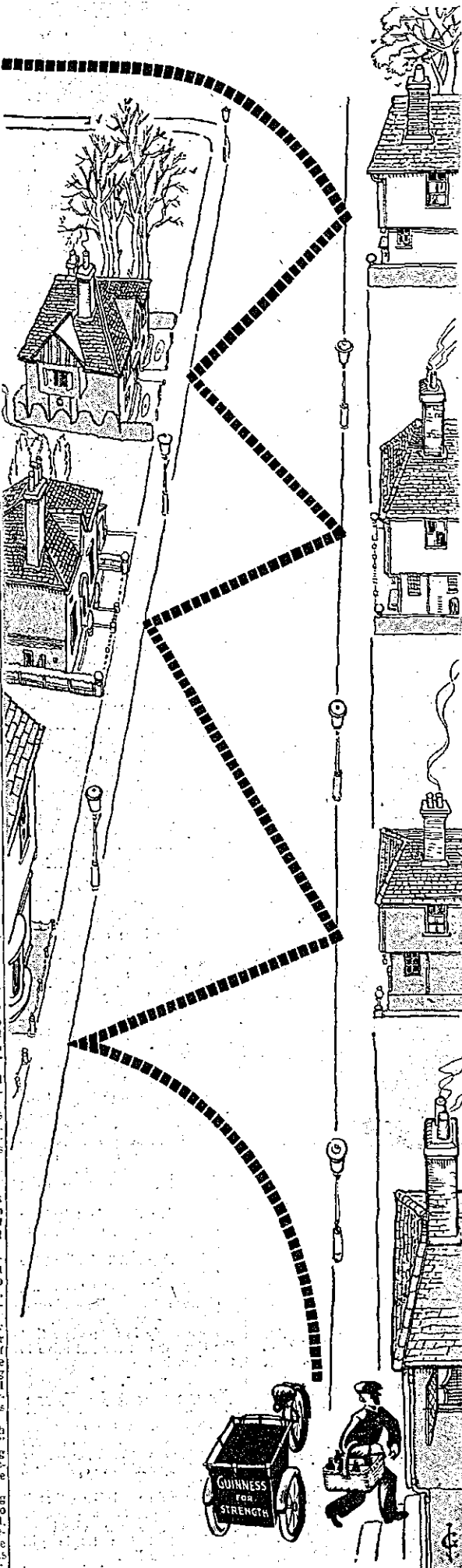
"No one," said Captain Eden, "has greater admiration than I for Mr. Churchill, a master of quips and jests, but I could not help feeling that the more mischievous the quip the more he relished it."

He chose to make a personal attack on the Prime Minister for his conduct of foreign policy, which reminded many of us of the attitude of certain sections of our own Press. He added to the style of that section of the Press the adornment of rhetoric of which he is a master, but I confess that I thought the embellishment only added to the offence.

"FANTASTIC ABSURDITY"

"He accused the Prime Minister of being responsible for the deterioration in international relations during the past four years. I do not believe that any one who has examined the course of international affairs during that period could regard the charge as other than a fantastic absurdity, though many who listened to the speech may have reckoned it more as a mischievous absurdity."

"The deterioration in recent years is due to causes that go much deeper than any for which this Government, or the last two Governments, are responsible, and for these causes we have to go back to an earlier date, when Mr. Churchill himself had a considerable responsibility and the present Prime Minister had none. We do little good to the cause of peace if we seek to torpedo it by partisan criticism."



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